



13.2 UNITINGCARE SA RELIEF CENTRES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE BY-LAW

13.2.1 The Synod shall establish the UnitingCare SA Relief Centres Oversight Committee.

OVERALL MANDATE

13.2.2 The mandate of the UnitingCare SA Relief Centres Oversight Committee will be to:

- (a) Assist the Church to fulfil its mission in serving the community, in caring for people and in working for their welfare, including to enable the appointment of relevant staff (e.g. a coordinator, deacon or chaplain).
- (b) Oversee compliance with relevant legislation and policy and risk management practices.
- (c) Assist in the development of local coordination for services.
- (d) Evaluate Relief Centres against the markers of success relating to sustainability and viability (**Attachment A**).
- (e) Support accessing grants.
- (f) Distribute any resources (as and when they become available).
- (g) Access relevant training for coordinators and volunteers.
- (h) Ensure adequate induction and training of staff and volunteers (e.g. especially in relation to mandated safety and food handling).
- (i) Provide an onboarding and off-boarding checklist for staff and volunteers to be checked as part of annual Governance reviews.
- (j) Share templates for policy and procedures.

RELATIONSHIPS

13.2.3 The UnitingCare SA Relief Centres Oversight Committee will work cooperatively with:

- (a) UnitingCare SA,
- (b) Local Relief Centres and participating congregations,
- (c) Relevant Presbyteries,
- (d) Uniting Church of Australia Synod of SA,
- (e) The Uniting Church SA Relief Fund,

- (f) Other UnitingCare agencies, and
- (g) other bodies relevant to achieving the overall mandate.

DEFINITIONS

- 13.2.4 “Appointing Authority” means The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of SA Standing Committee.
- “Relief Centres” means those activities supported by local congregations or their incorporated management to provide food and material relief to people in need.
- “Resources Board” means the body appointed by the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of SA to undertake the responsibilities of the Property Board set out in The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations (Regulation 4.2).
- “Church” means The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of SA and its Standing Committee.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 13.2.5 In establishing the UnitingCare SA Relief Centres Oversight Committee the following key responsibilities are upheld:
- (a) That Relief Centres are active participants in God’s mission of providing support for those in need.
 - (b) That the Church actively participates in areas of advocacy which affect disadvantaged or vulnerable members of our community.
 - (c) That governing bodies, staff and volunteers within Relief Centres are able to articulate what it means to be a Church organisation and how their programs and services are congruent with the values and ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia.
 - (d) That there is increased coordination and cooperation within the Relief Centres network and with other parts of the church, including agencies in association with the Uniting Church.
 - (e) That governance systems are in place which ensure:
 - (i) appointments to governing bodies are timely and those appointed are adequately resourced,
 - (ii) constituting documents are adhered to and amendments are undertaken and recorded appropriately,
 - (iii) any relevant risk inherent in the Synod’s relationship with Relief Centres is identified and managed responsibly.

- (f) That researched policies are formulated to maximise the missional impact of Relief Centres.
- (g) The approval of new Relief Centres, services and/or programs that enhance the achievement of the mandate.
- (h) That Human Resources and Work Health Safety related policies and procedures are embedded in Relief Centres to ensure the safety of clients, volunteers and staff.
- (i) That other such other responsibilities as the Synod Standing Committee shall determine from time to time are undertaken.

MEMBERSHIP

- 13.2.6 The UnitingCare SA Relief Centres Oversight Committee shall comprise of eight (8) members appointed by the Synod Standing Committee as the Appointing Authority and constituted in the following way:
- Independent Chairperson
 - One representative from each of the three Presbyteries
 - Two Relief Centre nominees (including one city and one country)
 - One large community service organisation representative (on rotation)
 - One Resources Board representative or their staff delegate
- 13.2.7 The Appointing Authority will appoint the Independent Chairperson on the recommendation of the Oversight Committee.
- 13.2.8 The UnitingCare SA Director shall act as the Executive to the Oversight Committee, prepare papers as needed and attend meetings, with no voting rights.
- 13.2.9 Oversight Committee members shall be appointed for a term of up to three years concluding on 31 December in any given year. Retiring members shall be eligible for re-election and may serve for a maximum of three consecutive terms, or for any number of non-consecutive terms provided they have a break of one three-year term.
- 13.2.10 Members who retire before the expiration of their term may be replaced by the Oversight Committee through the election of a person to complete the unexpired term, with such appointment to be approved by the Appointing Authority.
- 13.2.11 Members should demonstrate a commitment to the UCA ethos, structure and ethics.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 13.2.12 There are times when a Member may have a (real or perceived) conflict of interest. When a Member believes they may have a conflict of interest, they are to notify the Chairperson, and to detail the conflict. The Chairperson will then declare the conflict for the Oversight Committee to decide what actions are required.

DECISION MAKING

- 13.2.13 The Oversight Committee may establish any committees, task groups, consultancies or other instruments by which it may most effectively fulfil its mandate.
- 13.2.14 The quorum for each meeting of the Oversight Committee shall be half the current membership plus one.
- 13.2.15 The Oversight Committee shall meet at least four (4) times in a calendar year.

EVALUATION

- 13.2.16 To meet the outcomes in 13.2.5 above, a set of “Measures for Success” have been developed which are attached as **Attachment A**.

POLICY SETTING AND REPORTING

- 13.2.17 The Oversight Committee may determine its policies and priorities for its work, consistent with the strategic plan, goals and priorities of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of SA, but the Oversight Committee must ensure that it deals with any matters referred to it by the Synod Standing Committee or the Synod within timeframes specified by those bodies.
- 13.2.18 The Oversight Committee shall report to the Synod Standing Committee at least annually on outcomes achieved and, on any objectives, or priorities referred to it by the Presbyteries, Synod or Synod Standing Committee.

REVIEW

- 13.2.19 These by-laws and the workings of the UnitingCare SA Relief Centres Oversight Committee will be reviewed as needed with a structured review to be held in 2027 as part of a regular three-year review.
- 13.2.20 The Synod or its Standing Committee shall approve any changes to this by-law.

**By-Law approved by Synod Standing Committee
September 2024 SSC24.155**

ATTACHMENT A

Relief Centres – Measures of Success –

Reporting to the UnitingCare SA Relief Centres Oversight Committee

	<i>The following measures (both short term and long term) are seen as the key markers for a viable and sustainable Relief Centre operation into the future.</i>	
	The viability and sustainability of a Relief Centre (RC) into the future will be measured by a comprehensive approach covering: Clear Agreed Purpose - The Congregation has a clear and defined Mission Plan. - The Mission Plan includes the Relief Centre/Food Program/outreach. - The key core purpose and Objects of the Relief Centre are identified within the Congregation's Mission Plan. - Are the program plans for the Relief Centre to achieve these objects outlined in the Congregation's Mission Plan? - Are the program boundaries relating to what is (and is not) covered in the operations of the Relief Centre clearly defined in the Congregation's Mission Plan?	Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No
	Strong Connection between Congregation and the Relief Centre: - Is there a Memorandum of Understanding (or Rules/Terms of Reference) between the Church Council and the Relief Centre sub-committee? - Is there regular communication (reports) between the Relief Centre and the congregation to maintain awareness and support? - Does the Church Council appoint the Relief Centre leadership/committee so that appropriate governance oversight is maintained? - How does the Church Council ensure that volunteers contribute to the work and direction of the Relief Centre whilst governance is maintained by the Church Council? 	Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No
	Involvement and Skill Sets of Participants: Does a Skills Matrix exist for Relief Centre staff and volunteers?	Yes/No

	• Are training needs identified and skill gaps assessed?	Yes/No
	• Is there a documented volunteer recruitment, training and compliance program to ensure a diverse skill set and sustainable volunteer base?	Yes/No
	• Does this include a clear induction process?	Yes/No
	• Does your training program for Coordinators and key staff cover the following? ○ OH&S training ○ Volunteers Code of Conduct ○ Safe Church ○ Food handling ○ First aid ○ Manual handling ○ Cultural sensitivity ○ Dealing with difficult clients/complex needs ○ Other (please outline) 	Yes/No
	○ Volunteers Code of Conduct	Yes/No
	○ Safe Church	Yes/No
	○ Food handling	Yes/No
	○ First aid	Yes/No
	○ Manual handling	Yes/No
	○ Cultural sensitivity	Yes/No
	○ Dealing with difficult clients/complex needs	Yes/No
	○ Other (please outline) 	
	• Are general volunteers given opportunities to access such training as they step into more senior roles?	Yes/No
	• Has the Church Council developed leadership succession plans and capacity-building initiatives for staff and volunteers involved in the Relief Centre?	Yes/No
	Operations • Is the Presbytery informed of the Church's outreach and Relief Centre program?	Yes/No
	• Are there times when the boundaries identified in the Church's Mission Plan are stretched or stepped over?	Yes/No

	- Please give examples of where this has occurred and the responses from the Church Council team and the Relief Centre Staff and volunteers to get back on track within the set boundaries. - Are there systems in place to refer participants to other services/ organisations for needs outside of the ERC's mandate? Yes/No - Are the Coordinator, Ministry agent or key volunteers identified and trained to be able to deal with such pastoral referrals? Yes/No - Are the program plans to deliver a Relief Centre realistic? Yes/No - Are the program plans to deliver a Relief Centre achievable? Yes/No - Are the program plans to deliver a Relief Centre sustainable in the life of your Congregation? Yes/No - Is the Relief Centre with its finances and operations reviewed annually by UnitingCare SA through their Governance and Finance Review (GFR) process? Yes/No - In the event that a Congregation closes, and the Relief Centre has the capacity to keep operating, is there a clear transition/exit strategy for this to occur? Yes/No - What are the partnerships/networks to which your Congregation/ Relief Centre belong? (Please identify those that have Uniting Church links with UC and those external agencies with an Ex.)	
	Compliance and Response Capacity: - Is there a risk register kept by Church Council and the Relief Centre committee? Yes/No - Is there a set of readily accessible policies, procedures and work instructions? Yes/No	

	Do these documents include safety protocols, client intake procedures, and volunteer management?	Yes/No
	Are these documents regularly reviewed to adapt to changing needs, capacities and regulations?	Yes/No
	Are areas of improvement identified, documented and communicated to the Church Council?	Yes/No
	Where critical incidents occur, are there identified responders working to a set of protocols and communication plans?	Yes/No
	Financial Sustainability: - Is the Relief Centre audited separately annually? - Does the Church Council and Relief Centre Committee regularly assess current income streams and expenses? - Does such assessment consider that the Relief Centre has the capacity to pay its debts as and when they fall due? - If the answer to the above question is No, what are you doing to test the financial viability of the Relief Centre? - Has the Relief Centre diversified its funding sources through grants, donations, and fundraising initiatives? - What other financial planning strategies have been implemented for long-term sustainability? 	Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No

	Is there a clear delegation between the Church Council (Congregation) and the Relief Centre regarding the treatment of surpluses and losses?	Yes/No
	Environmental Sustainability: Is the Relief Centre adopting environmentally friendly practices such as waste reduction, recycling, energy efficiency, and sustainable sourcing of resources to minimise the Relief Centre's carbon footprint and contribute to a healthier environment for future generations?	Yes/No